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THE Poultry and Egg SITUATION

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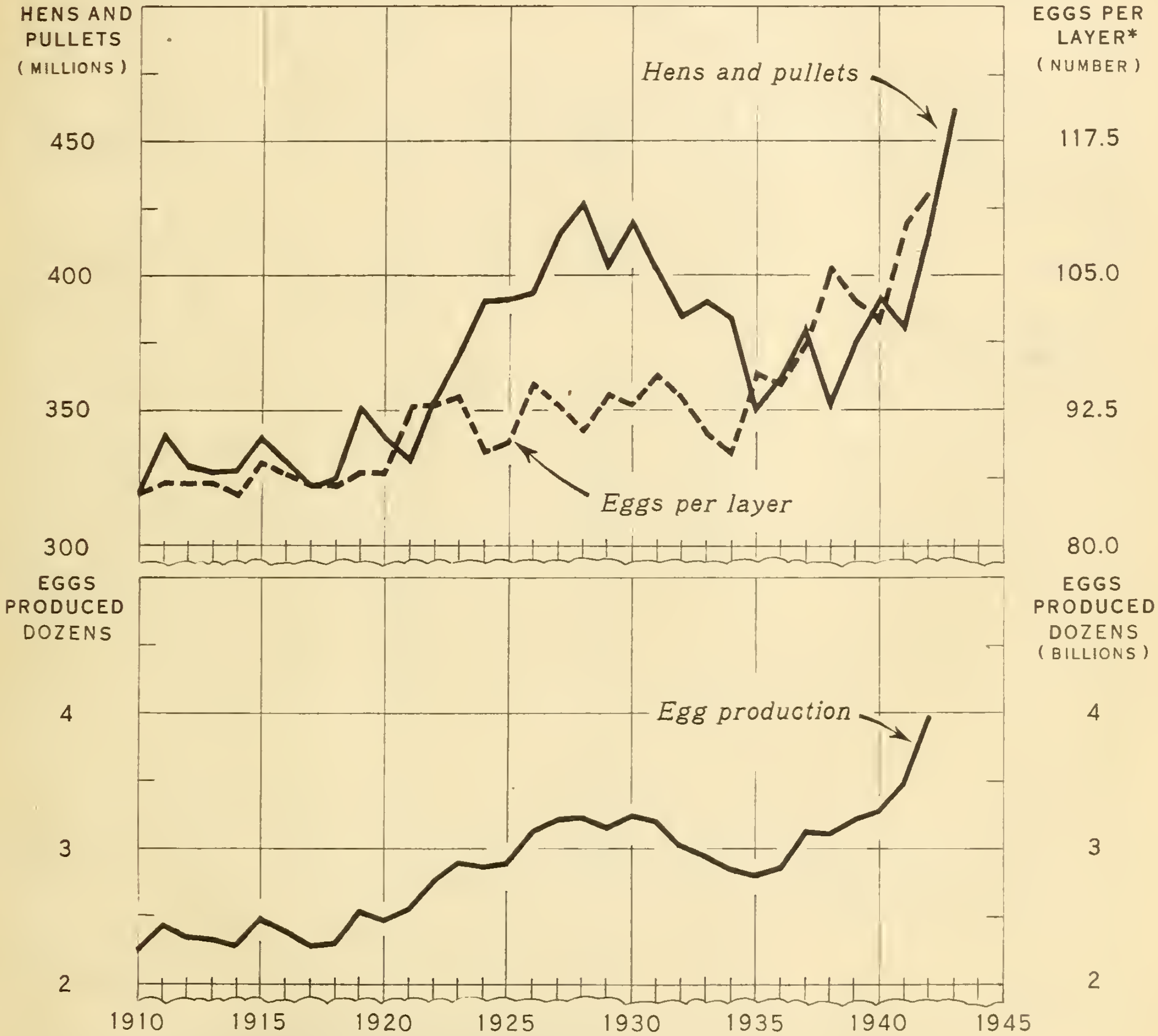


HENS AND PULLETS ON FARMS AND EGGS PER LAYER JANUARY 1, AND TOTAL EGG PRODUCTION ON FARMS, UNITED STATES, 1910-43

*AVERAGE NUMBER OF EGGS PRODUCED ANNUALLY PER HEN AND PULLET ON FARMS JAN. 1
DATA FOR 1942 AND 1943 ARE PRELIMINARY

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NEG. 39521 BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

In response to favorable prices, farmers saved an unusually large proportion of available potential layers (pullets and old hens) during the last half of 1942. Preliminary data indicate that laying flocks on January 1 were 9 percent larger than a year earlier. Laying flocks contain a larger proportion of pullets than last year, so with favorable egg prices a high rate of lay per bird is likely to continue.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

ITEM	UNIT	DECEMBER AVERAGE		1941		1942		PCT. OF YEAR EARLIER
		PERIOD	AVERAGE	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	
Number of layers on farms	*Million*	1931-40	323.0	333.0	358.7	372.7	397.6	111
Number of eggs laid per hen	*Number*	1931-40	5.5	6.47	7.28	6.75	7.32	101
Total farm production of eggs	*Mil. case*	1931-40	4.9	5.99	7.26	6.99	8.08	111
Stocks, eggs:[1]								
Privately owned, shell	*1,000 case*	1932-41	661	1,278	298	1,170	259	87
Privately owned, frozen	*1,000 case*	1932-41	1,888	2,756	2,187	3,346	2,185	100
USDA owned, shell	*1,000 case*	--		392	251	0	0	0
USDA owned, frozen	*1,000 case*	--		698	361	23	13	4
Total	*1,000 case*	1932-41	2,574	5,124	3,097	4,539	2,457	79
Purchases, eggs, USDA:								
Dried[2]	*Mil. lb.*	--	--	4.2	9.3	3.6	4.5	48
Shell direct	*1,000 case*	--	--	16	72	10	3	4
Shell, blue stamp[3]	*1,000 case*	--	--	118	124	118	--	100
Dried egg production	*Mil. lb.*	--	--	7.5	8.3	18.8	13.4	161
Commercial hatchery operations:								
Eggs set	*Million*	--	--	34.84	38.86	40.39	46.83	121
Chicks hatched	*Million*	--	--	22.56	24.58	24.91	29.14	119
Receipts:								
Poultry, dressed, four markets	*Mil. lb.*	1931-40	67.1	74.9	80.7	73.5	64.5	80
Poultry, live, Chicago[4]	*Car*	1936-40	419	485	486	424	361	74
Poultry, live, New York[4]	*Car*	1936-40	830	625	727	744	777	107
Poultry, live, Midwest, per plant	*1,000 lb.*	1932-40	21.7	33.8	21.5	36.0	21.7	101
Fowl (hens), live, Midwest, per plant	*1,000 lb.*	1932-40	10.8	12.3	9.4	16.7	12.1	129
Young stock, live, Midwest, per plant	*1,000 lb.*	1932-40	10.7	21.0	11.6	18.9	9.3	80
Stocks, poultry:[1]								
Broilers	*Mil. lb.*	1982-41	14.5	14.2	14.0	10.6	9.2	66
Fryers	*Mil. lb.*	1932-41	13.8	17.6	18.1	17.3	15.8	87
Roasters	*Mil. lb.*	1932-41	34.1	37.9	45.5	45.0	43.6	96
Fowls (hens)	*Mil. lb.*	1932-41	23.6	37.7	44.2	50.5	46.3	105
Turkeys	*Mil. lb.*	1982-41	27.2	21.1	50.0	26.9	35.7	71
Ducks	*Mil. lb.*	1933-41	5.1	9.4	6.9	5.9	3.4	49
Miscellaneous and unclassified	*Mil. lb.*	1932-41	28.5	35.0	39.6	37.0	34.1	86
Total poultry	*Mil. lb.*	1932-41	141.8	172.9	218.4	198.8	188.0	86
Prices received by farmers:								
Eggs, per dozen	*Cent*	1931-40	26.3	35.5	34.1	38.9	39.7	116
Eggs, parity price per dozen	*Cent*	1931-40	36.6	43.3	38.4	47.0	47.0	122
Eggs, percentage of parity	*Percent*	1931-40	72	82	90	83	97	--
Chickens, per pound	*Cent*	1931-40	12.7	15.5	15.8	19.6	20.5	130
Chickens, parity price per pound	*Cent*	1931-40	14.5	16.3	16.3	17.7	17.7	109
Chickens, percentage of parity	*Percent*	1931-40	87	95	97	111	116	--
Turkeys, per pound	*Cent*	1936-40	16.4	20.2	20.9	27.0	29.7	142
Turkeys, parity price per pound	*Cent*	1936-40	18.6	20.6	20.6	22.3	22.3	108
Turkeys, percentage of parity	*Percent*	1936-40	89	98	101	121	133	--
All farm commodities (1910-14 = 100)	*Index no.*	1931-40	95	135	143	169	178	124
Chickens and eggs (1910-14 = 100)	*Index no.*	1981-40	119	157	153	178	183	120
Wholesale prices, Chicago:								
Eggs, fresh firsts, per dozen	*Cent*	1931-40	25.0	36.1	34.1	40.0	40.0	117
Live heavy hens, per pound	*Cent*	1936-40	16.6	18.4	19.8	21.8	23.5	119
Live broilers, B.R., per pound	*Cent*	1936-40	18.4	20.2	19.8	28.0	27.7	140
Live roasters, light, W.R., per pound	*Cent*	1936-40	17.5	18.1	18.6	26.5	28.0	151
Live roasters, heavy, W.R., per pound	*Cent*	1936-40	17.3	16.5	19.4	23.5	26.5	137
Cash farm income:[5]								
Total marketings	*Mil. dol.*	1936-40	720	1,210	1,128	1,765	--	146
Poultry and eggs	*Mil. dol.*	1936-40	76	129	126	179	--	139
Price ratios:								
Chicago, Broiler, B.R.,-feed	*Lb. feed*	1936-40	14.5	13.5	12.3	16.6	14.9	121
Chicago, Light Roasters, W.R.,-feed	*Lb. feed*	1936-40	14.1	12.1	11.6	15.7	15.1	130
Farm, egg-feed	*Lb. feed*	1931-40	27.2	25.5	23.2	24.2	23.5	101
Farm, chicken-feed	*Lb. feed*	1931-40	12.7	11.1	10.7	12.2	12.1	113
Farm, turkey-feed	*Lb. feed*	1936-40	14.4	14.5	14.2	16.8	17.6	124
Feed cost per cwt., farm poultry ration	*Dollar*	1931-40	1.10	1.39	1.47	1.61	1.69	115
Wholesale food prices (1935-39 = 100)	*Index no.*	1931-40	92.9	112.9	114.4	130.8	--	116
Retail food prices (1935-39 = 100)	*Index no.*	1931-40	95.7	113.1	113.1	131.1	132.7	117
Prices paid by farmers including interest and taxes (1910-14 = 100)	*Index no.*	1931-40	128	143	143	155	155	108
Retail prices (BLS):								
Roasters, dressed, per pound	*Cent*	1931-40	28.3	31.7	32.1	42.7	43.1	134
Eggs, strictly fresh, per dozen	*Cent*	1931-40	39.6	51.9	49.0	59.0	59.8	121
Nonagricultural employees' compensation (1935-39 = 100)	*Index no.*	1931-40	97.1	157.4	164.5	207.1	--	132

[1] End of month. Frozen eggs converted to case equivalent. [2] Includes purchases for future delivery. [3] Adjusted for wastage in distribution. [4] Car equivalent of receipts by freight, truck and express. [5] Figures for 1941 and 1942 are not strictly comparable; figures for poultry and eggs for 1942 are based on revised production data and include broilers.

THE POULTRY AND EGG SITUATION

Summary

Egg production in the United States in 1943 is likely to be substantially larger than the record output of 1942. Laying flocks are much larger than last year, and have a larger proportion of pullets. The egg-feed price ratio will be exceptionally favorable this year and egg prices probably will be slightly more favorable than last year relative to prices of hogs and butterfat. Although supplies of ready-mixed laying mash apparently will not fully meet the record demand from farmers in all localities, total quantities fed will be much larger than last year, and the average protein content will be the highest on record.

As a result of much greater production of eggs on farms and considerably smaller quantities used in drying, domestic consumption of eggs in January has been greatly in excess of consumption a year earlier. In 1942 as a whole an average of 316 eggs per person was consumed. Seasonal increases in supplies have occurred, and prices of high quality eggs in eastern markets in mid-January were moderately below the ceilings. Egg prices in Pacific Coast markets continued firm. Quantities used for drying, for storing, and for hatching will increase in the immediate future and supplies for civilians will be reduced. Therefore, with a strong consumer demand, egg prices will continue materially higher than a year earlier.

Poultry prices at wholesale have continued at the maximum levels permitted by the cents-per-pound ceilings announced on December 18. Prices of all classes are materially higher than a year earlier. Supplies of poultry in the next few months, though at a seasonally low level, will be materially larger than a year earlier. Net withdrawals of poultry from storage started in mid-December, about 2 weeks earlier than usual, and on January 1 were smaller than on December 1 or on January 1 last year but were larger than average.

Production of chicks by commercial hatcheries is much larger than a year earlier, reflecting principally the strong demand for chicks from areas of specialized production of young chickens for meat. Advance orders for laying flock replacement purposes also are much larger than a year ago. On January 1, bookings for later delivery exceeded the advance orders of a year earlier by 47 percent. In December 1942, 19 percent more chicks were hatched and 21 percent more eggs set than in the corresponding month of 1941.

— January 21, 1943

REVIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Number of Layers 9 Percent Larger Than a Year Earlier

Conditions were favorable in 1942 for raising pullets. The average hatching date was earlier than in 1941 and fall weather was generally mild, permitting uninterrupted growth to maturity. The earlier hatching date was reflected in earlier additions to laying flocks than occurred a year earlier. Numbers of layers on farms increased 72 million head from September to November 1942, compared with an increase of 62 million head in the corresponding period of 1941. The increase this season from November to December, however, was no larger than the increase of a year earlier. The preliminary estimate of numbers on farms January 1 shows an increase of 9 percent over last year.

The rate of lay per bird during December in Eastern States and in Western States was slightly lower than in December 1941, but in the Central States the rate was higher than the record set in that month last year. The average for the Nation was about 1/2 percent higher than in December 1941. With nearly 11 percent more layers in flocks, production was about 11 percent larger than a year earlier. Egg production on farms in 1942 was 4 billion dozens, 15 percent larger than production in 1941.

Storage Stocks of Eggs on January 1 Lowest Since 1939

Storage stocks of frozen eggs were reduced the equivalent of 1.2 million cases during December and on January 1 total stocks in the United States were 2.2 million cases. Stocks of shell eggs also were greatly reduced during December. On January 1 about 259,000 cases of shell eggs were in storage in the United States, the smallest total since 1933, when there were 159,000 cases. The equivalent of all frozen and shell eggs in storage in the United States at the beginning of 1943 was 2.5 million cases, about 21 percent smaller than total holdings a year earlier. Among regions, distribution of storage stocks of both shell and frozen eggs on January 1 was about the same as a year ago.

Production of dried egg declined further in December, totaling 13.4 million pounds compared with 18.8 million pounds in November. Of the 1.3 million cases of shell egg equivalent used in drying, about 490,000 cases were obtained from frozen eggs, 358,000 cases from storage shell eggs and 448,000 cases from fresh shell eggs. Purchases of dried egg by the Department of Agriculture for delivery in January are about two-thirds as large as in January last year when 11 million pounds of dried egg were produced.

Egg Prices Decline Moderately in January

Egg production on farms so far in 1943 apparently has been much larger than a year earlier. Because of price uncertainties, egg driers have made fewer contracts for the sale of dried egg to Government agencies than in January of last year and the quantities being used by drying plants are considerably smaller than a year ago. No shell eggs have been purchased by the Department of Agriculture. In January 1942 about 142,000 cases of shell eggs were purchased mainly for lend-lease. Although considerable quantities of shell eggs have been purchased for military purposes, current consumption by civilians is much larger than a year ago. In mid-January, wholesale prices of eggs at New York averaged about 15 percent higher than a year earlier.

During the first 2 weeks of 1943 with relatively large supplies available, prices of higher quality eggs in Eastern markets declined as much as 10 cents below ceiling levels -- the highest prices reached in the period September 28-October 2, 1942 inclusive. Prices of lower grades, however, continued close to ceiling levels. Prices at Chicago declined somewhat in the first half of January. In Pacific Coast markets prices of all eggs were at ceiling levels in mid-January, and supplies were short of market requirements. In the third week of the month, prices at Chicago and New York increased slightly.

Net Withdrawals of Poultry from Storage at Record Levels in December

Marketings of chickens in general farming areas continue to decline seasonally. Young chickens in the Midwest were marketed earlier in 1942 than in 1941. In late December 1942 and early January 1943, receipts of young stock at Midwestern primary markets were slightly smaller than a year earlier. Total marketings of young chickens from specialized producing areas probably are much heavier than a year earlier, as hatchings in the past several months have been at record levels. Demand for poultry has been very strong. Withdrawals from storage started this season about 2 weeks earlier than usual, to supplement supplies of freshly produced birds. Storage stocks were reduced 5 million pounds during December. In all previous years recorded, holdings increased from December 1 to January 1. Stocks on January 1 were only 14 percent smaller than the record of a year earlier, however, and were the third largest on record for that date and about one-third larger than average.

Stocks of all classes of poultry except turkeys declined during December. Stocks of roasters on January 1 were about 2 million pounds smaller than the record of a year ago but were much above average. Holdings of roasters were smaller on January 1 than on December 1 in all regions except the West North Central and East South Central States.

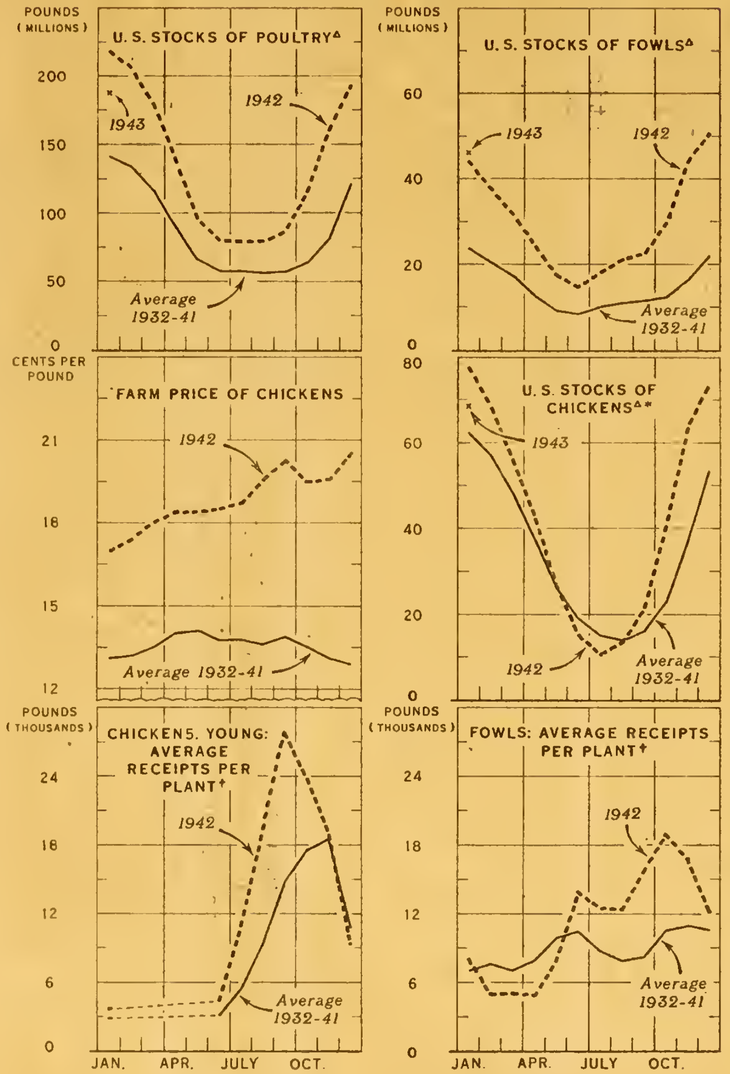
Prices of All Poultry Much Higher Than Last Year

In eastern and midwestern markets the cents-per-pound ceilings for poultry announced by the Office of Price Administration on December 18 permitted moderate increases in prices of fowl and small young chickens, and considerable increases in prices of heavy young chickens. In California markets, however, where demand had increased greatly before the temporary "freeze" period (September 28-October 2, 1942) prices of live young birds under 3 pounds were higher under the temporary ceilings than the levels announced in the permanent regulation. Ceilings for other classes in Pacific Coast markets were about the same as prices under the temporary order.

On January 6 the San Francisco Office of Price Administration announced that the ceiling levels from the temporary freeze period for chickens under 3 pounds would continue in effect for the California area until February 15. The Office of Price Administration will make a study of costs of production and other factors by that time. On January 13 it was announced that all OPA regional offices would make adjustments in poultry prices where necessary to alleviate local shortages.

Prices of poultry have been steady at ceiling levels for the past several weeks. In early January prices of fowls at New York were 20 to 25 percent higher than a year earlier. Prices of young chickens were 40 to 45 percent higher than in early 1942. In Pacific Coast cities prices of young birds were 40 to 50 percent higher than they were in January last year. Turkey prices in all markets are materially higher than a year earlier.

On January 7 the Office of Price Administration announced maximum retail prices for poultry by prescribing fixed margins over retailers' net costs. The resulting levels are slightly higher than those that prevailed during the period September 28-October 2.



THE POULTRY SITUATION

△ 1ST OF THE MONTH * INCLUDES BROILERS, FRYERS, AND ROASTERS
† RECEIPTS AT CENTRAL WESTERN PRIMARY MARKETS

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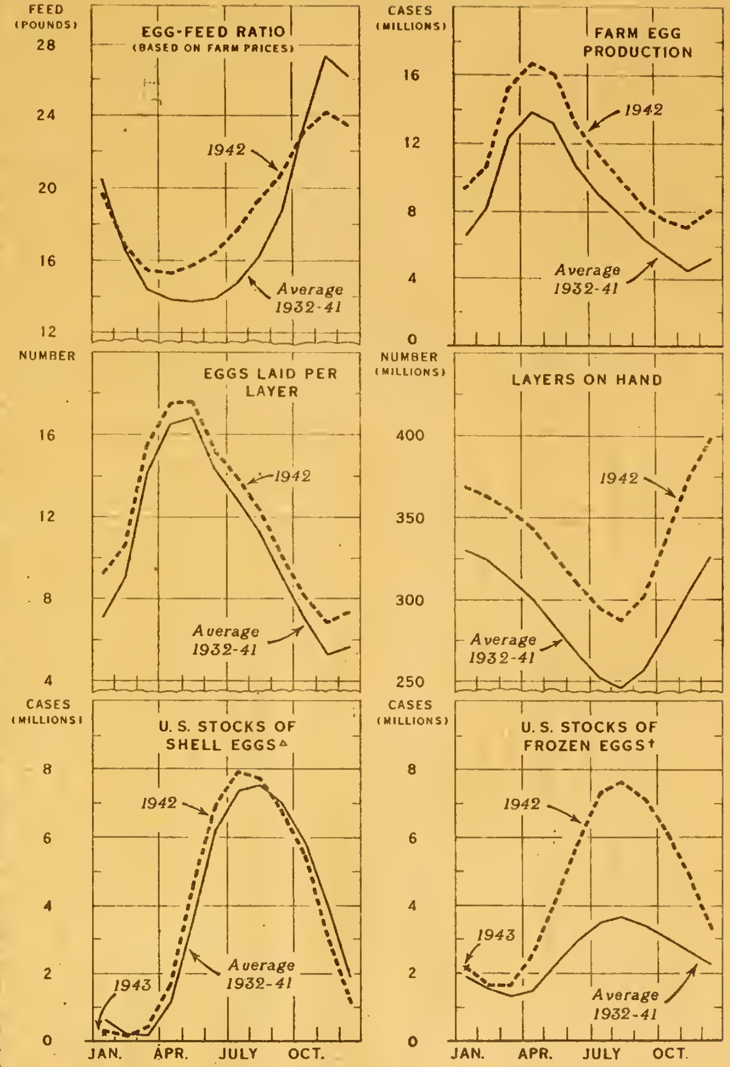
FIGURE 1



THE EGG SITUATION

△ 1ST OF THE MONTH, EXCLUDES U. S. D. A. HOLDINGS, BEGINNING APRIL 1, 1940
† 1ST OF THE MONTH, EXCLUDES U. S. D. A. HOLDINGS, BEGINNING JULY 1, 1941

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FIGURE 2

OUTLOOK

BACKGROUND.- Egg production in the United States during 1942 was 15 percent, or about 585 million dozen, larger than in 1941. The quantities purchased for military and lend-lease use also were larger than in 1941, and domestic consumption was the same as in 1941 -- 316 eggs per person. With a stronger consumer demand, and supplies unchanged, prices increased more than seasonally during the year, and in early October temporary ceilings for egg prices were established at the highest levels reached in the September 28-October 2 period. Prices to farmers were favorable. As a result, the maximum number of laying birds was saved for laying purposes in 1943.

Laying Flocks Composed of Larger Proportion of Pullets Than Last Year

In the last 4 months of 1942, numbers of layers increased more than usually has occurred following a 10 percent increase in numbers of chickens raised the previous spring. On January 1 the number of pullets on farms was 10 percent larger than on the corresponding date a year earlier and the number of hens (1 year old or over) was 6 percent larger than on January 1 last year. The preliminary estimate of 462 million potential layers on farms at the beginning of 1943 contained 66 percent pullets, compared with 65 percent last year, and the 1931-40 average of 62 percent. Average size of laying flocks was 9 percent larger than on January 1, 1942. With a larger proportion of pullets in laying flocks and a very favorable egg-feed price ratio in prospect, it is likely that the rate of lay per bird in 1943 will be as high as it was in 1942. Moreover, numbers of layers may decline less than usual in coming months. Total egg production in the United States in 1943 will be substantially larger than the record output in 1942.

If present estimates of noncivilian requirements are fully met in 1943, however, supplies of eggs for domestic civilian consumption will be no larger than those in 1942. Total requirements for dried egg in 1943 are more than 50 percent larger than the record output of drying plants (227 million pounds) in 1942. About 23 million cases of eggs, or 16 percent of total United States egg production were used by drying plants in 1942. More than 200 million dozens of eggs may be used for hatching in 1943, compared with about 165 million dozens in 1942.

Favorable Egg and Chicken Prices Reflected in Strong Demand for Baby Chicks

Number of chicks produced by commercial hatcheries during December was 19 percent larger than the record hatch of December 1941. About 91 percent of chicks hatched were of heavy breeds compared with 94 percent in December 1941. The number of eggs set in December was 21 percent larger than a year earlier. Midwinter demand for baby chicks is largely from specialized producers of young chickens for meat.

Strong demand for chicks is indicated by the 47 percent larger advance orders this January 1 than last. Increases were shown for all regions.

Marketings of Poultry at Seasonally Low Level

During the next few months sales of young chickens by producers in general farming areas will be about the same as a year earlier, since the number of young chickens (other than pullets) on farms January 1 was equal to the record number a year earlier. Sales of fowl may be slightly larger than last year since the number on farms is much larger. Sales of young chickens by farmers in specialized producing areas will be much larger than last winter and early spring. Total marketings of chickens in the United States in the next few months, therefore, will be considerably larger than in corresponding months of 1942. Supplies of fresh meat will be supplemented by continued heavy net withdrawals from storage.

Although supplies of poultry for consumption in coming months will be the largest on record, prices of all classes are likely to continue at ceiling levels. Storage stocks of some classes will be exhausted earlier than usual this season, but supplies of chicken from the early hatch will be available in large volume earlier than usual.

Prices of Poultry and Eggs Likely to Continue Favorable Relative to Feed Costs

Prices of corn advanced 8 to 10 cents per bushel from mid-December to January 12. Prices of oats and barley increased 3 to 6 cents during that period and prices of byproduct feed and oilmeals continued at ceiling levels. Average price paid by farmers for laying mash in mid-December was $2.95, compared with $2.92 in November and $2.68 in mid-December 1941. Wholesale prices of laying mash increased slightly from mid-December to mid-January. Further increases in feed prices will be limited by price ceilings. The Office of Price Administration has frozen corn prices at highest prices reached in the second week of January, and on January 9 ceiling prices were placed on mixed feeds.

The strong demand for oilmeals from livestock and poultry raisers has exceeded the supply at ceiling prices in many localities. In an effort to alleviate this situation, the Department of Agriculture has ordered that stocks of oilmeals held by dealers and feed mixers be limited to a 15-day supply. The supply of grain and byproduct feed for the 1942-43 season is by far the largest on record, and the average protein content is higher than in any previous year. Supplies of animal protein feeds this year are smaller relative to poultry numbers than in other recent years, but supplies of vegetable proteins, especially soybean meal, are much larger.

As commercially mixed feeds are being used in increasing quantities for poultry, it is likely that this species of livestock will benefit to a large degree from available supplies of high-protein feeds. For some other species, hogs for example, protein feeds usually are purchased separately and used to supplement home-grown grains. Supplies of protein feeds, unmixed with other feeds, are particularly scarce because feed mixers have contracted directly with the crushers for most of the record output. The heaviest demand for feed for poultry will come after the heavy winter dairy-cow feeding season.

The egg-feed price ratio this spring may be the most favorable on record, and for 1943 as a whole will be well above average. Chicken-feed and turkey-feed relationships also will be favorable for farmers this year. The egg-hog price relationship will be favorable to hogs again in 1943, but the margin of hogs over eggs will not be so great in 1943 as it was in 1942. The egg-butterfat price relationship will be more favorable for egg producers than it was in 1942, and will be somewhat more favorable than the 1931-40 average. Consequently, in 1943 producers in diversified farming areas may tend to devote relatively greater effort to producing eggs than to producing butterfat or hogs. Family labor can be utilized more readily in poultry production than in many other enterprises.

North Atlantic States - 6 Percent More Layers

The 6 percent larger number of potential layers on farms in the North Atlantic States on January 1, compared with last year, had about the same proportion of hens and pullets as in 1942. A larger proportion of pullets was laying by January 1 this year than last. Farmers in this area will depend to a considerable extent upon feed shipped in from the Midwest. Temporary shortages of feed may occur in some localities, but barring general difficulties in getting feed, egg production in this area will continue larger than a year earlier. Eastern markets will be supplied by a larger proportion of eggs from the North Atlantic area than last year. Prices received by farmers for all grades of eggs are likely to continue favorable.

South Atlantic States - 7 Percent More Layers

Egg prices in the South Atlantic States were favorable in the second half of 1942. As a result, farmers saved a larger-than-usual proportion of potential layers from available laying stocks, and numbers on January 1 were 7 percent larger than a year earlier. Egg production in this area will be larger than last year, but egg prices relative to feed costs are likely to be more favorable this spring than last.

The Department of Agriculture has announced egg purchase programs for the Southern States to be used if price support should become necessary. Egg production has increased greatly in these States in the last few years and existing marketing facilities may be overtaxed in the heaviest production months as they were last year. Through one program, the Food Distribution Administration will purchase eggs at announced prices in lots as small as 10 cases. Prices will be announced before the beginning of any purchase operation, and will be in terms of United States consumer grades. Under a second program, announced January 12, eggs will be purchased on an offer and acceptance basis in lots of 100 cases or larger. The two programs apply to the same States -- Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. (Some of these States are in the South Central group.)

East North Central States - 7 Percent More Layers

Numbers of pullets not of laying age on January 1 in the East North Central States were about the same as on January 1 last year. However, because there were more laying pullets and old hens in flocks this year than last, numbers of potential layers were 7 percent larger. Total numbers now are the largest on record. The rate of lay per bird in this area during December was about the same as in December 1941, and probably will continue at a high level through 1943.

West North Central States - 11 Percent More Layers

Egg prices in the West North Central States were relatively favorable during all of 1942. An increase of 11 percent in number of layers is indicated as a result of last spring's 16 percent increase over a year earlier in numbers of chickens raised. In 1943, prices of eggs relative to prices of hogs and butterfat are likely to be more favorable than in 1942. The egg-feed price ratio is particularly favorable and the rate of lay per bird will be maintained at a high level. A large proportion of eggs from this territory will be dried for military and lend-lease uses.

South Central States - 12 Percent More Layers

Numbers of all pullets and old hens in the South Central States are much larger than a year ago. On January 1, numbers exceeded 100 million head for the first time on record, compared with less than 90 million on January 1, 1942. Egg-feed price relationships last year in this region, like those in the West North Central States, were particularly favorable, and stimulated productio of chickens and eggs. The response was most pronounced in western sections of the region, where requirements for drying were large. Egg-drying plants will take even larger quantities in 1943, and considerable quantities of fresh shell eggs will be purchased for military camps.

Western States - 3 Percent More Layers

Supplies of feed grains in the Western States are about one-fourth larger than last year. Supplies of high-protein feeds continue scarce but may tend to increase because of the crushing of soybeans in West Coast copra mills. Demand for all animal-protein foods has increased greatly in the past year, and in 1943 all the poultry products that can be produced in that section will be used there. Number of layers on farms on January 1 were 3 percent larger than last year, but somewhat below the record high of the early 1930's.

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